

cup that was sold, for a gargantuan total of \$9 trillion.

In reality, the bulk of these suits settle for their nuisance value, the costs of continuing to litigate. They represent a tax that patent lawyers are imposing on domestic manufacturing—a shift in wealth to lawyers that comes at the expense of manufacturing jobs. Well, this bill prevents such abuses by repealing the statute's *qui tam* action while still allowing parties who have separate actual injury from false marking to sue and allowing the United States to enforce a \$500-per-product fine where appropriate. *Qui tam* statutes are a relic of the 19th century and generally produce far more litigation than is in the public interest. Almost all of these statutes have been repealed.

The America Invents Act continues this trend. By repealing the false marking *qui tam* statute, the AIA will allow American companies to spend money hiring new workers rather than fighting off frivolous false marking suits.

In conclusion, the America Invents Act will provide important benefits to U.S. inventors of all sizes, to startup companies, to domestic manufacturing, and to the U.S. economy generally. I look forward to its passage by the Senate and its enactment into law.

As the majority leader stated in his remarks in leader time, I hope those who may have amendments will immediately file those amendments so the Senate can take them up in good order, have plenty of time to debate them, and dispose of them in the appropriate way. It would be my hope the Senate will end up passing the bill adopted by the House of Representatives so our action can result in sending the bill directly to the President for his signature. That is an accomplishment that could be achieved with cooperation between the House and the Senate, between Democrats and Republicans, between the legislative and executive branches, and I think it would certainly begin to mark the time when the American people could see their legislative representatives begin to work together on their behalf.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CARSON CITY SHOOTING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I was saddened to hear just a few minutes ago of a senseless act of violence committed in our capital, Carson City, NV. It happened at a restaurant. There are few details of what happened and what led

to this tragedy that occurred just a few minutes ago, but according to early reports three people are now dead and six others have been wounded by a single gunman.

So I extend my deepest sympathies to all of those who have been affected. The victims and their families are in my thoughts and will be every day, and certainly they have been during the last several minutes. I am disturbed to hear that two of the victims were serving this Nation proudly as part of the Nevada National Guard.

I commend the brave first responders who rushed to the scene for their professionalism.

Carson City is a wonderful place. I have spent time there through three legislative sessions. There are the beautiful Sierra, NV, mountains. It is a peaceful, quiet place; and to have something such as this happen is very difficult to accept.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HURRICANE IRENE

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, as I suspect you know, Vermont has been hit very hard by Hurricane Irene. The storm caused widespread flooding, resulting in a number of deaths, the loss of many homes and businesses, and hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to property and infrastructure.

I have visited many of the most hard-hit towns in the past week, including Ludlow, Wilmington, Brattleboro, Berlin, Moretown, and Waterbury. I was shocked and moved by the extent of the damage I saw. Many towns still have very limited access because the roads and bridges that link them to the world have been destroyed. This disaster will go down in history as one of the very worst natural disasters in the history of the State of Vermont.

Let me take this opportunity to personally thank the emergency rescue teams and all those aiding the victims of the floods for their outstanding work. Local crews, along with the Vermont National Guard, and Guard units from other States, such as New Hampshire, Maine, and Illinois, have airline-lifted food, water, blankets, and medicine to the worst hit towns. Police, fire, and local officials have also done an extraordinary job.

We still don't know the cost of this disaster—it probably will not be tabulated for a while—but let me share a few figures in terms of what we have experienced. Just days after the declaration of a major disaster by the President, more than 2,000 Vermonters had already registered with FEMA—

2,000. To date, there have been more than 700 homes confirmed as severely damaged or destroyed.

I had the opportunity to go to some trailer parks in Berlin, in central Vermont, and I was down in the southern part of the State in Brattleboro and it is an incredibly sad sight to see. Mobile homes, where senior citizens were living, have been destroyed. They are now forced to relocate. It was a very tragic circumstance.

Further, the storm has knocked out 135 segments of the State highway system, as well as 35 State bridges, completely isolating 13 communities for several days. An unknown number of farms and businesses have been destroyed.

I was down in Wilmington, a beautiful town in the southern part of the State on Route 9. Virtually their entire downtown business community has been severely damaged, and that is clearly undermining the fabric not only of the economy of that town but of towns throughout the State.

Our Amtrak and freight rail services were completely suspended as tracks literally washed into rivers. So we had tracks underwater. The State's largest office complex is located in Waterbury, VT, a few miles from our capital, Montpelier, and I visited that facility. It had been completely flooded. There are 1,700 people who work there. For a small State, that is a lot of people—1,700 people—who work in our major office complex in Waterbury. That has now been shut down for an indefinite period of time. That impacts, obviously, the State's ability to provide services to the people of Vermont.

At least 65 public schools were impacted and could not open on time. School is just beginning, with 65 public schools not able to open on time. This is just a short list of some of the devastation that is going on in the State.

I also want to call to the attention of the Senate another extraordinary tragedy in our State, and that is the death of a gentleman named Michael Garafano. Mr. Garafano was an employee of the city of Rutland, and Rutland was very hard hit by this disaster. He and his son went up to a local dam to inspect the condition of the dam. They were hit by a flash flood and both of them lost their lives. So here we have an extraordinary public servant, trying to protect the well-being of the people of Rutland, and he gave his life in that effort. Mr. Garafano's effort will never be forgotten.

As we go forward—not just for Vermont but for New Jersey, for North Carolina, and we know upstate New York was also hard hit—I have every confidence the Senate and the House will do for Hurricane Irene as we have done for other natural disasters that have impacted different parts of our country, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make sure, as Americans, we rebuild the communities in Vermont and in other sections of the country that were devastated by this terrible flood.